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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2011

Twenty-seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/66/394/Add.1), in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the addendum to the report of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for 2011 (A/66/30/Add.1). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General and the secretariat of ICSC, who provided additional information and clarification.

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2. As in the past, the Advisory Committee has confined its consideration of the financial implications of decisions and recommendations contained in the report of ICSC to those submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General in his statement. As indicated in the statement, the report of the Commission reconsiders the revised rest and recuperation framework proposed in the Commission's report for 2011 (A/66/30) and approved by the General Assembly in section C of its resolution 66/235, taking into account new information which was not available at the time the Assembly reached its conclusion on the matter, in December 2011.

3. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, at its seventy-third session, in 2011, the Commission decided on a revised rest and recuperation framework that would become effective on 1 January 2012, with a frequency cycle of four weeks linked to danger pay. The Commission also decided to discontinue hazard pay and introduce, effective 1 January 2012, danger pay on the basis of the revised criteria set out in annex II to the Commission's report for 2011. In the addendum to that report (A/66/30/Add.1), the Commission indicates that when the framework was being developed, the duty stations that would be approved for danger pay, which was to come into effect on 1 January 2012, were unknown. Given the stricter definition of danger pay (compared with hazard pay), the Commission had expected that it would be applied to a limited number of locations. Thus, when the recommendation was made to link the four-week rest and recuperation cycle with danger pay, it was assumed that there would be no significant financial and operational impact. In its resolution 66/235, the General Assembly approved the Commission's revised set of criteria for granting rest and recuperation travel and the corresponding frequency of travel, including the link established between the four-week cycle of rest and recuperation and danger pay.

4. However, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the number of locations that were subsequently identified for danger pay, in February 2012, represented a significant increase in the number of locations previously identified for a four-week rest and recuperation cycle. In the addendum to its report for 2011 (A/66/30/Add.1, paras. 10 and 11), the Commission indicates that, according to the organizations of the common system, the automatic triggering of a four-week rest and recuperation cycle in all duty stations approved for danger pay presented serious operational implications, resulting in the need to either increase staffing levels to make up for absences or reduce operations and operating budgets to enable payment of more frequent travel. At its session held in the first quarter of 2012, the Commission therefore decided to delay the implementation of the revised rest and recuperation framework until 1 July 2012. It is requesting the General Assembly to consider approving, with an effective date of 1 July 2012, a revised set of criteria for granting rest and recuperation travel and the corresponding frequency of travel, as set out in the annex to the addendum to its report, including: (a) a 6-week cycle for extreme situations, including very dangerous locations and locations where there is war or active armed conflict; (b) an 8-week cycle for non-family/restricted duty stations; and (c) a 12-week cycle for duty stations with a high level of hardship. Under the proposed framework, it is envisaged that for very exceptional cases, a four-week rest and recuperation cycle could be approved by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission, under delegated authority from the Commission, upon the recommendation of the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

5. In his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that should the General Assembly approve the recommendations of the Commission, there would be no additional resource requirements under the programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2012-2013, the budget for peacekeeping operations or the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the 2012/13 period. He further indicates that should the General Assembly decide not to follow the Commission's recommendation, the frequency of the rest and recuperation cycles would result in loss of productivity at duty stations where danger pay is applicable that may render necessary increases in and/or realignment of staff resources. However, the Secretary-General states that he is not in a position to estimate precisely the eventual requirements. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that currently only 16 duty stations (Baghdad, Basra, Kandahar and Kirkuk, and 12 duty stations in Somalia) were under the four-week rest and recuperation cycle. However, if danger pay were to automatically trigger the four-week rest and recuperation cycle, some 145 locations currently identified for danger pay would qualify for the four-week cycle.

6. As regards travel costs, the Secretary-General indicates that it is not anticipated that there would be significant increases for the United Nations Secretariat because of the availability of United Nations flights for most rest and recuperation travel. The Advisory Committee was assured that new flights would not be required to accommodate United Nations requirements for any additional travel resulting from the application of the four-week cycle. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with the estimated additional travel costs for the specialized agencies, funds and programmes, which is attached as annex II to the present report.

7. The Advisory Committee notes that the United Nations adopted four-week and six-week rest and recuperation cycles as an exceptional and temporary measure in recognition that, in a select number of duty stations, staff are exposed to extremely stressful living and working conditions in isolated and dangerous locations, and that, therefore, it is considered necessary to allow staff to reduce their stress levels and maintain their mental health and well-being (see A/66/30/Add.1, para. 5; see also ST/AI/2011/7/Amend.1). Danger pay, as defined in the criteria in annex II to the Commission's report for 2011, is a special allowance established for internationally and locally recruited staff who are required to work in locations where very dangerous conditions prevail. The Advisory Committee notes that with the revised criteria proposed by ICSC, the six-week rest and recuperation cycle would be associated to dangerous locations and locations where there is war or armed conflict, and that a four-week cycle could be applied, for very exceptional cases, subject to approval by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission.

8. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on the criteria used to determine the four-week and the six-week rest and recuperation cycles, as well as on the input of the Department of Safety and Security in determining the rest and recuperation cycle. The information provided to the Committee is attached as annex I to the present report.

9. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of ICSC for the year 2011 (A/66/394, paras. 12-14), it was indicated that, owing to a reduction in the number of duty

stations eligible for danger pay as compared with the number of duty stations that were eligible for hazard pay, the financial impact of the Commission's recommendation with respect to the payment of danger pay would result in annual savings of approximately $19.6 million for the United Nations system organizations and $15.9 million for the United Nations. The savings were estimated at $2,905,900 and $12,285,200 annually for the regular budget and the budgets of peacekeeping operations, respectively.

10. The Advisory Committee notes that danger pay was implemented on 1 April 2012 (see A/66/30/Add.1, para. 9). In the light of the indication in the current statement of the Secretary-General (A/66/394/Add.1) that the number of locations identified for danger pay was significantly higher than anticipated, the Advisory Committee requested additional information on the estimated financial impact in terms of requirements for danger pay as compared with previous requirements for hazard pay. The Advisory Committee was informed that this information was not readily available and would need to be compiled from data to be obtained from each duty station. The information requested could not be provided to the Advisory Committee in time to be included in the present report. **The Committee therefore requests that at the time of its consideration of this matter, the Secretary-General provide information to the General Assembly, including on the following elements: (a) the total expenditures for hazard pay in 2011; (b) the estimated total annual requirements for danger pay; (c) the number and category of staff having received hazard pay and the total amount of hazard pay paid by duty station during the month of March 2012; (d) the number and category of staff having received danger pay and the total amount of danger pay paid by duty station during the month of April 2012; (e) the estimated number of staff by category and duty station eligible for a four-week rest and recuperation cycle under the current rest and recuperation frameworks; and (f) the estimated number of staff by category and duty station eligible for a six-week rest and recuperation cycle under the current rest and recuperation frameworks.**

11. At its request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a list of the current hazard and danger pay locations as well as the current four-week and six-week rest and recuperation locations, which is attached as annex III to the present report. The Committee was also provided with the number of duty stations and staff that qualify for hardship allowance (see annex IV to the present report).

12. The Advisory Committee also sought clarification on the process for the classification of danger pay locations as well as on the reasons why the number of locations identified was significantly higher than anticipated. It was informed that, subsequent to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 66/235, the Department of Safety and Security had conducted a thorough review to identify the danger pay locations, in line with the criteria set out in annex II to the report of ICSC for 2011. **The Advisory Committee considers that a full explanation should be provided to the General Assembly on the underlying causes for divergence between the anticipated and actual number of danger pay duty stations as well as information on the application of the aforementioned criteria approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/235.**

13. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its resolution 63/251, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of CEB, to urge the heads of the organizations of the United Nations

common system to fully support the work of the Commission, in conformity with its statute, by providing it with relevant information in a timely manner for studies that it conducts under its statutory responsibilities for the common system, as well as by other possible means. **The Advisory Committee urges the Secretary-General to fully respond to that request. It emphasizes the need for accurate and reliable data to support informed decision-making on proposals and the implementation of measures with significant financial and administrative implications.**

Conclusion

14. **Taking into account the views expressed in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note that should the recommendations of the Commission be adopted, there would be no additional resource requirements under the programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2012-2013, the budget for peacekeeping operations or the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.**

Annex I

Criteria for determining the four-week and the six-week rest and recuperation cycles and input of the Department of Safety and Security in determining the rest and recuperation cycle

Prior to the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) rest and recuperation framework in December 2011, the Human Resources Network Field Group of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination had established a rest and recuperation framework with frequencies ranging between six weeks and six months, and the four-week cycle would be applicable only as an exceptional measure outside the framework under circumstances where the security situation was so extreme that it placed additional hardship and isolation on staff (e.g. staff had to be accommodated in bunker-like accommodation with no natural light, very limited social interaction and very confined movements) or extreme natural disasters (e.g. the earthquake in Haiti).The Field Group last met in November 2011 to review the eligibility of duty stations for rest and recuperation cycles. The Field Group applied the criteria under their framework and used the following means to obtain additional information to determine the rest and recuperation cycles of each duty station:

(a) A questionnaire forwarded to the country teams;

(b) Information provided by the Department of Safety and Security;

(c) Information from organizations' field offices.

At that time, the Field Group determined that duty stations in only three countries met the exceptional measure for the four-week rest and recuperation cycle as follows: Afghanistan (Kandahar), Iraq (Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk) and Somalia (all 12 duty stations).

Six-week cycles are applied to all extreme non-family duty stations with considerable insecurity and active conflict.

The eligibility of the duty stations reviewed and recommended by the Field Group in November 2011 will remain in effect until 30 June 2012. As of 1 July 2012, the ICSC rest and recuperation framework criteria will be implemented. The Department of Safety and Security will continue to provide information on security when the rest and recuperation locations are reviewed.

Annex II

Estimated additional travel costs for the specialized agencies, funds and programmes

The secretariat of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) estimates that the cost for the specialized agencies, funds and programmes relating to rest and recuperation travel would increase by 43 per cent if all internationally recruited staff serving in duty stations eligible for danger pay were to be automatically granted the four-week rest and recuperation cycle. This calculation is based on the assumption that approximately 10 trips per year would be taken under the four-week cycle, or seven trips under the six-week cycle. It should be noted that personal rest and recuperation cycles of staff members vary and may not always begin on 1 January. Based on those assumptions, the ICSC secretariat estimates that the total annual cost for the specialized agencies, funds and programmes would be $33.4 million for the four-week rest and recuperation cycle, and $23.4 million for the six-week rest and recuperation cycle.

The estimates are based on actual travel expenditures for the three-month period from January through March 2012 provided by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Labour Organization for locations where hazard pay was still in effect.

If danger pay automatically triggers the four-week rest and recuperation cycle, all danger pay locations (approximately 145) would qualify for the four-week rest and recuperation cycle. Currently, only 16 duty stations (Baghdad, Basra, Kandahar and Kirkuk, and 12 duty stations in Somalia) fall under the four-week rest and recuperation cycle.

Annex III

Current hazard and danger pay locations and current four-week and six-week rest and recuperation locations

Hazard pay effective 31 March 2012	*Danger pay 1 April to 30 June 2012*	*Current four-week rest and recuperation locations*	*Current six-week rest and recuperation locations*[a]
Afghanistan (entire country and extended hazard pay)	**Afghanistan**	**Afghanistan** (Kandahar)	**Afghanistan** (rest of country)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (Bas Congo, Equateur Province, North Katanga District, North Kivu Province, South Kivu Province, Province Orientale (Ituri, Haut Uele and Bas Uele districts only), and Maniema Province)	**Democratic Republic of the Congo** (North Kivu Province, South Kivu Province, Orientale Province (Bas Uele, Haut Uele and Ituri districts only), Maniema Province)		
Côte d'Ivoire (Guiglo only)			
Ethiopia (in Afar, east of the Dese-Mekela Road and north of the Kombolcha-Djibouti Road and Asseita; in the Somali region, the border area with Kenya, including Moyale and Tigray, north of Adrigat, Axum and Inda Selassie towns and Gambela region)	**Ethiopia** — Somali region		
Gaza			**Gaza** (all locations)
India (Indian administered side of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, excluding Ladakh)			
Iraq (entire country and extended hazard pay)	**Iraq** (entire country, with the exception of Erbil)	**Iraq** (Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk)	**Iraq** (rest of the country)
Kenya (North-eastern Province, including Dadaab, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera and Ijara; Eastern province districts of Moyale and Marsabit; Rift Valley province districts of Turkana District, including Lokichoggio, Lodwar and Kakuma)	**Kenya** (North-eastern Province, including Garissa, Dadaab, Mandera, Wajir, Ijara)		**Kenya** (Dadaab)

Hazard pay effective 31 March 2012	*Danger pay 1 April to 30 June 2012*	*Current four-week rest and recuperation locations*	*Current six-week rest and recuperation locations*[a]
Lebanon (south of the Litani River except for the Tyre pocket)	**Lebanon** (South Lebanon-United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon Area of Operations, except the Tyre pocket)		
Libya (entire country and extended hazard pay)			**Libya** (Al Khufra, Benghazi, Tobruk, Tripoli)
Pakistan (entire country and extended hazard pay)	**Pakistan** (Balochistan Province, Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Province (formerly, North-West Frontier Province) and Federally Administrated Tribal Areas)		**Pakistan** (entire country)
Philippines (southern Philippines to cover some areas of Mindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Cotabato City, Lahad Del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga City, Basilan, Tawi Tawi and the Sulu Archipelago)			**Philippines** (Cagayan de Oro, Iligan City)
Russian Federation (Kabardino Balkaria and Caucasus region: Republics of Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan)			
Somalia (entire country and extended hazard pay)	**Somalia**	**Somalia** (entire country — 12 locations)	
South Sudan (except Juba County)	**South Sudan** (Unity State, Upper Nile State, Jonglei State, Warrap State (except Tonji South county), Lakes State (only Awerial, Yirol East, Rumbek Centre, Rumbek North and Rumbek East counties), Northern Bar El Gazal State (only Aweil East and Aweil North counties), Western Bar El Gazal State (all locations north of the road Kafia-Gabir-Kosho-Raja, excluding Raga town), Western Equatoria (only all locations south of the road Morobo-Yei-Maridi-Yambio-Nadi-Tambura, except Yambio town))		**South Sudan** (entire country)

Hazard pay effective 31 March 2012	*Danger pay 1 April to 30 June 2012*	*Current four-week rest and recuperation locations*	*Current six-week rest and recuperation locations*[a]
Sudan (North Sudan Transitional Areas (including the three Protocol Areas, namely Abyei, Southern Kordofan State and Blue Nile State) and Darfur)	**Sudan** (the Darfurs (West, South and North), Abyei Administered Area, Southern Kordofan State and Blue Nile State)		**Sudan** (Abyei, Ed Damazin, Darfur region, Kadugli, Kauda, Kurmuk, Muglan)
	Syrian Arab Republic (the entire country except Damascus (city boundaries) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force Area of Operations)		**Syrian Arab Republic** (entire country)
Uganda (Karamoja region)			
Yemen (entire country and extended hazard pay)	**Yemen**		**Yemen** (Aden, Harad, Sa'dah, Sana'a)
Number of countries: 18	**Number of countries: 13**	**Number of countries: 3**	**Number of countries: 11**
Number of locations: approximately 181	**Number of locations: approximately 145**	**Number of locations: 16**	**Number of locations: approximately 95**

[a] Based on ST/IC/2012/6/Amend.3, issued on 26 April 2012.

Annex IV

Number of duty stations and staff qualifying for hardship allowance

Duty station category	*Number of duty stations*	*Number of internationally recruited staff*
B	74	3 473
C	89	3 971
D	110	1 879
E	221	3 925
Total	**494**	**13 248**